

Message Text

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APPROVED BY M/MO:RTBURNS
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EUR/EX - J. TULL (DRAFT)
PER/CDA/FS/T&R-B.L. GROVES (DRAFT)
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SUBJECT: MODE - TREASURY (CUSTOMS SERVICE) REQUEST TO
ESTABLISH A US POSITION AT USEC BRUSSELS

GENEVA FOR MISSION AND MTN

1. LETTER FROM TREASURY DEPARTMENT REQUESTSESTABLISHMENT
OF ONE CUSTOMS SERVICE US POSITION AT USEC BRUSSELS TO
COVER THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CUSTOMS COOPERATION COUNCIL.

2. TREASURY'S JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REQUEST IS AS
FOLLOWS: QUOTE. FOR SOME TIME THERE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSIONS
IN BOTH WASHINGTON AND BRUSSELS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF
PLACING ON THE STAFF OF EITHER THE US EMBASSY, BRUSSELS,
OR THE US MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, A US
OFFICIAL WHO WOULD REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CUSTOMS
COOPERATION COUNCIL AND SUPPLY A LINK BETWEEN THE WORK OF
THE COUNCIL AND OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEAL-

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ING WITH TRADE MATTERS ON WHICH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
COUNCIL IMPACT. THE STEADILY INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF THE
CUSTOMS COOPERATION COUNCIL IN THE FIELD OF FOREIGN TRADE
AND THE NEED FOR ON-THE-SPOT SUPPORT FOR US EFFORTS IN THE

COUNCIL MAKE IT IMPORTANT THAT FORMAL ACTION ON THE

PROPOSAL BE TAKEN AT AN EARLY DATE. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL NOT ONLY AFFECT THE TECHNICAL CUSTOMS ASPECTS OF THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN TRADE, WHICH ARE IN THEMSELVES OF SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE TO US GOVERNMENT AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS, BUT ALSO AFFECT TRADE NEGOTIATIONS IN A NUMBER OF AREAS INCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS ON TARIFF RATES AND NON-TARIFF BARRIERS. THE BRUSSELS TARIFF NOMENCLATURE, THE BRUSSELS DEFINITION OF VALUE, AND THE CUSTOMS CONVENTION ON CONTAINERS, 1972, ARE ALL ADMINISTERED BY THE COUNCIL. AT PRESENT THE COUNCIL IS DEVELOPING THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE SIMPLIFICATION AND HARMONIZATION OF CUSTOMS PROCEDURES, WHICH EVENTUALLY WILL TREAT ALL ASPECTS OF CUSTOMS PROCEDURES AND THE INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZED COMMODITY DESCRIPTION AND CODING SYSTEM WHICH CAN SERVE AS AN INTERNATIONAL COMMODITY CODE FOR TRANSPORTATION AS WELL AS FOR CUSTOMS PURPOSES. THE LATTER PROJECT IS OF MAJOR INTEREST TO US GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PRIVATE BUSINESS SECTORS; IT COULD BECOME A WIDELY USED COMMODITY CODE FOR SHIPPING AND THE COLLECTION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS AND FORM THE BASIS OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS TARIFF CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM. END QUOTE.

3. AS PROPOSED BY TREASURY, FUNCTIONAL TITLE AND GRADE OF THE PROPOSED POSITION WOULD BE CUSTOMS OFFICER, GS-15, US MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES. THE DUTIES OF THE POSITION WOULD INCLUDE:

(A) DEVELOP CLOSE LIAISON WITH THE COUNCIL SECRETARIAT IN ORDER TO KEEP WASHINGTON ADVISED OF WORK SCHEDULES AND CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNCIL AND ENSURE EFFECTIVE US INPUT INTO COUNCIL PROJECTS AT THE EARLIEST TIME POSSIBLE. CURRENT REPORTING ON THE COUNCIL IS ESPECIALLY NECESSARY FOR DEVELOPING POSITION PAPERS, ANTICIPATING NECESSARY ACTION, AND OBTAINING TIMELY PARTICIPATION BY PRIVATE SECTORS IN THE POLICY FORMATION PROCESS.

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(B) KEEP ABREAST OF THE WORK OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON TRADE MATTERS WHICH RELATE TO COUNCIL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS CUSTOMS-RELATED WORK IN UNCTAD, ECE, AND GATT, AND USE THIS INFORMATION IN REPORTING TO CALL ATTENTION TO ANY LINKAGE BETWEEN THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL AND THE WORK OF THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS. THIS WOULD BE DONE PRINCIPALLY BY READING REPORTS, DOCUMENTS, AND CABLE TRAFFIC. IN ADDITION, ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON, SERVE ON DELEGATIONS TO MEETINGS OF THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AS AN ADVISOR ON CUSTOMS AND COUNCIL MATTERS; ALSO, ON AN INFORMAL BASIS, BE AVAILABLE

TO DELEGATIONS TO MEETINGS OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS FOR CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL MATTERS. AS IN THE CASE OF DELEGATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETINGS (SEE (D) BELOW), IT IS EXPECTED THAT MOST CUSTOMS ADVISORS ON DELEGATIONS TO MEETINGS OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WOULD CONTINUE TO COME FROM WASHINGTON.

(C) DEVELOP LIAISON WITH OTHER RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE COUNCIL AND ON COUNCIL MATTERS, WITH THE CUSTOMS DIVISION OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND REPORT TO WASHINGTON AS APPROPRIATE.

(D) AS NEEDED, FILL IN AS DELEGATE, OBSERVER OR ADVISOR ON US DELEGATIONS TO COUNCIL MEETINGS. BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF MEETINGS AND THE BROAD SPECTRUM OF TECHNICAL MATTERS COVERED, IT IS EXPECTED THAT REPRESENTATION FOR MOST MEETINGS WOULD CONTINUE TO COME FROM WASHINGTON IN ORDER THAT PROPER LEVELS OF TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE COULD BE ENSURED. THE ABOVE DUTIES WOULD BE CARRIED OUT UNDER THE POLICY DIRECTION OF THE US MISSION AND THE SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF THE US AMBASSADOR, WITH CABLE SIGNATURE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ONE OF THE MISSION COUNSELORS. FOREIGN OFFICIALS WHO WOULD NORMALLY BE DEALT WITH ARE: THE SECRETARY GENERAL, THE TWO ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERALS AND THE STAFF OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CUSTOMS COOPERATION COUNCIL; OFFICIALS OF THE CUSTOMS DIVISION OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES UP TO AND INCLUDING THE DIRECTOR, OTHER RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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COUNCIL.

4. IN VIEW OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT OF THE CUSTOMS COOPERATION COUNCIL, TREASURY BELIEVES A FAVORABLE REACTION BY THE GOB TO THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POSITION CAN BE ANTICIPATED.

5. TREASURY DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO ESTABLISH THE POSITION AS OF JANUARY 1, 1977, WITHOUT AN ANTICIPATED DATE OF DISESTABLISHMENT. ALSO WOULD LIKE THE OFFICER FILLING THE POSITION TO BE DESIGNATED A CUSTOMS ATTACHE, HAVE DIPLOMATIC STATUS AND RECEIVE THE PERQUISITES OF A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER OF COMPARABLE RANK. TREASURY WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING SALARY AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS, AS WELL AS USUAL OVERSEAS ALLOWANCES. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR THIS POSITION WOULD BE INCLUDED IN EMBASSY FAAS SUBMISSIONS FOR REIMBURSEMENT AT THE WASHINGTON LEVEL. TREASURY STATES THAT OFFICER WOULD ALSO NEED LOCAL SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE WHICH WOULD BE REIMBURSED ON A DIRECT PROGRAM BASIS.

6. ACCORDING TO TREASURY, THE PROPOSAL HAS BEEN DISCUSSED AND APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE BY THE INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CUSTOMS COOPERATION COUNCIL MATTERS.

7. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING FULL COMMENTS FROM USEC BRUSSELS AND AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS INCLUDING IMPACT ON ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT CAPABILITIES, AVAILABILITY OF SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE, ESTIMATED COSTS OF ESTABLISHING AND OPERATING THE CUSTOMS UNIT, VALUE OR SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTIVITIES NOT CURRENTLY BEING PERFORMED IN ABSENCE OF THE PROPOSED POSITION; AND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR MEETING ESSENTIAL REPORTING AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS WITHOUT ESTABLISHING A PERMANENT CUSTOMS POSITION (E.G., IMPROVED LIAISON OF MISSION AND EMBASSY OFFICERS WITH SEVERAL USG PERSONNEL WORKING IN CCC SECRETARIAT). FOR EXAMPLE, PRELIMINARY MODE REVIEW IN WASHINGTON HAS RAISED QUESTIONS ON FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) WHAT KINDS OF COMMUNICATIONS ARRANGEMENTS DO THE POSTS AND CUSTOMS/WASHINGTON CURRENTLY HAVE WITH THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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AMERICAN DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CCC SECRETARIAT AND WITH OTHER AMERICANS WORKING IN THE SECRETARIAT STAFF? SINCE LIAISON WITH AND REPORTING ON THE CCC EVIDENTLY NEED STRENGTHENING AND SINCE THE US PAYS 25 PERCENT OF THE CCC ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENSES, IS IT NOT POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE WITH THE CCC SECRETARIAT STAFF TO BETTER MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING IDENTIFIED IN THE TREASURY REQUEST, WITHOUT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL USG POSITION AT BRUSSELS?

(B) WHICH OTHER CCC MEMBER COUNTRIES HAVE FULL-TIME SPECIAL CUSTOMS LIAISON PERSONNEL AT BRUSSELS PERFORMING TASKS SUCH AS THOSE DESCRIBED BY TREASURY? DO DUTIES OF THE PROPOSED JOB PROVIDE FOR INITIATIVES AND REPRESENTATIONAL AUTHORITY ADEQUATE TO MEET PRESENT AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE USG NEEDS VIS-A-VIS THE CCC?

(C) SHOULD THE PROPOSED NEW FUNCTIONS (LIAISON, INFORMATION COLLECTING, REPORTING, FOLLOWING THE RELEVANT WORK OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SUPPORTING AND PARTICIPATING ON DELEGATIONS, ETC.) BE PERFORMED BY USEC OR BY EMBASSY BRUSSELS? WHERE ARE THESE FUNCTIONS CURRENTLY PERFORMED? HOW MUCH TIME (OFFICER, US CLERICAL AND LOCAL) IS DEVOTED TO THEM?

(D) INsofar AS THE DESCRIBED FUNCTIONS ARE TRULY CRITICAL, WHY CANNOT THEY BE ABSORBED BY EXISTING USG ECONOMIC/ COMMERCIAL RESOURCES AT THE POSTS (E.G., LIAISON, DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING SHOULD BE WITHIN THE COMPETENCE

OF AN E/C SECTION)? WHAT EXISTING FUNCTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCONTINUED IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT THE CRITICAL ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED?

(E) TO PERFORM ESSENTIAL TASKS NOT NOW BEING DONE, HOW MUCH TIME (OFFICER, US CLERICAL AND LOCAL) WOULD BE REQUIRED? TO WHAT EXTENT COULD THE POSTS MEET IMPORTANT NEEDS WITH SERVICES OF A SKILLED FSL WORKING UNDER THE GENERAL OVERVIEW OF A MIDDLE-OR-SENIOR LEVEL ECONOMIC/ COMMERCIAL OFFICER POSITION ALREADY ESTABLISHED?

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(F) SHOULD THE OFFICER FUNCTIONS (WHETHER EXISTING OR ADDITIONAL) BE PERFORMED BY THE CUSTOMS SERVICE OR THE FOREIGN SERVICE?

(G) IF ONE OR MORE NEW POSITIONS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN USEC OR THE EMBASSY, AT WHAT GRADE LEVELS SHOULD THEY BE CLASSIFIED AND HOW SHOULD THEY BE SUBORDINATED IN THE MISSION TO ASSURE MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS (GS-15 SEEMS A HIGH GRADE FOR THE JOB OUTLINED BY TREASURY)? PLEASE SPECIFY PREFERRED RELATIONSHIP WITH EXISTING E/C SECTIONS, PLUS ANY TITLE OR PERQUISITES RECOMMENDED. KISSINGER

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